

Revised 01.01.21



Dial-A-Ride Paratransit Service Rider's Guide

**Columbus Consolidated Government
METRA Transit System**

(706) 225-4596

Dear Customer

METRA Transit System is committed to providing each of our customers with safe, reliable, dependable, and cost-effective transit services with a professional team of employees, dedicated to our customers' needs and committed to excellence.

METRA's ADA paratransit service, "**Dial-A-Ride**," provides origin-to-destination public transportation to eligible persons whose disabilities prevent them from using the fixed route bus for some or all trips. Each year, METRA provides an estimated 250,000 trips on its Dial-A-Ride service. METRA's Dial-A-Ride service meets the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, 19 CFR Parts 37, 38, and 39, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (49 CFR Part 27), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4710.1, and other applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

METRA works closely with the community to seek ways to further improve its programs and services. We are most successful when METRA and its customers work together as partners. To meet the continuing need to provide more trips to more people, we must optimize METRA's limited resources. Here is how you can help us to achieve our mission.

Your participation is a win, win for all when you:

- Use the fixed route bus service and pay half fare using your ID card.
- Be ready to board the bus at your pick-up time.
- Cancel trips you do not need **two (2) hours before** your bus is scheduled to arrive.

Every customer is important to us at METRA. Please help us to provide you with the best service possible. We look forward to serving you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rosa L. Evans". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Rosa Evans, Director

Department of Transportation/METRA

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What is Dial-A-Ride?

Dial-A-Ride is an ADA complementary paratransit service of the Columbus Metropolitan Transportation System/METRA. Dial-A-Ride provides a curb- to-curb bus service for eligible persons with disabilities who are **unable** to use the fixed route bus service, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

Who is eligible for this service?

METRA's Dial-A-Ride services are available to customers who:

- Are unable to board, ride or disembark from a fixed route bus.
- Have specific impairments that prevent travel to a bus stop to board a fixed route bus and/or have specific impairments the prevent travel to a final destination after disembarking from a fixed route bus.
- Must be at least 12 years of age, if not accompanied by an adult. Children below 12 using Dial-A-Ride must be accompanied by an adult.

Individuals who believe they are eligible must apply for certification. Certification applications must provide information of a certified licensed professional who is familiar with your disability. METRA Transit makes all final eligibility determinations based on information provided and ADA regulations regarding eligibility.

Eligibility is not based on age, economic condition, or inability to drive an automobile. Having a medical condition or a disability will not automatically qualify applicants for an ADA paratransit eligibility.

Approval and Appeals Process

Individuals who are not eligible for service will be notified by ADA Coordinator within twenty-one (21) working days of receipt of a completed application. Written appeals of ineligibility are to be forwarded to METRA's Transit Director within ten (10) working days of the denial. The Director will make the final eligibility determination and notify the applicant within t (10) working days. Questions regarding eligibility can be called into METRA Transit System at (706) 226-4596.

What areas are served?

METRA's Dial-A-Ride service areas are centered along METRA's ten (10) fixed bus routes, extending in a **three quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) of a mile** radius on either side of the routes. Each Dial-A-Ride service area has the same service hours as the fixed route it is centered on. Locations within a service area will **only** be serviced by Dial-A-Ride within those hours.

Please remember that:

- All passenger trips must begin and end within the established transit service area.
- Transfer points will be established for passengers traveling outside of the service area.

See pages 10 and 11 for service area map.

What are Dial-A-Ride's service hours?

Dial-A-Ride's services are provided:

- **Monday through Saturday**, consistent with regular fixed route service hours, **4:30am-10:30pm**.
- With last pickups at **9:30pm**.

Please note that **Dial-A-Ride's holiday service hours** are the same as METRA's fixed route holiday service hours.

How do you apply for Dial-A-Ride services?

To apply for Dial-A-Ride's services, please call METRA at (706) 225-4596. Calls are accepted between 8am and 4:30pm, Monday through Friday.

An application form can be mailed to you upon request or may be found on our website at:

<https://www.columbusga.gov/metra/Riding-METRA/Dial-A-Ride>.

Once on the page, click on the "[METRA Dial-A-Ride Application Form](#)" link in the "Rider's Guide & Application" section. Please print, fill out and send this form to METRA via mail.

Please complete the application and mail it to METRA at:

METRA Transit System
P.O. Box 1340
Columbus, GA, 31902-1340

Please note that:

- All applications must be signed by the applicant or a designated signer familiar with the history of the applicant listed on the application.
- If you are visually impaired, assistance with an application may be provided upon request.

Notifying you when a decision is made on your application

Customers will be notified by mail once a decision has been made by METRA. The notification will either confirm the customer's eligibility for Dial-A-Ride services or deny eligibility. Once a customer is confirmed and approved for Dial-A-Ride service, they must come to METRA's Administration Office to have a Dial-A-Ride ID card made.

Getting your ID card made

ID cards are made by appointment **Monday through Friday from 8am until 4:30pm**. Customers must come to the METRA Administration Building to have their ID cards made.

The Administration Building is located on the northern part of the METRA campus at **814 Linwood Blvd., Columbus, GA (On the corner of Linwood Blvd. and 9th Ave. Across the street from Linwood Cemetery).**

METRA Eligibility Cards are accepted across the country and can be used to ride paratransit services wherever available.

There is **no charge** for the initial ID card.

Replacing a lost ID Card

If a METRA ID card is lost or misplaced, then a customer may obtain a replacement card for a fee of **\$5.00** for the first duplicate and **\$10.00** for the second.

Temporary Disabilities

Persons with temporary disabilities may obtain a METRA ID card. This card is valid for the **expected time of the disability**. If the disability continues, then METRA will require another certification process.





How do you make a Reservation?

You can make a Dial-A-Ride reservation by calling (706) 225-4596. The hours for calling to schedule a trip reservation are from 8am to 4:30pm, Monday through Sunday. You may also call and leave a message during off hours.

Reservations can be made up to **fourteen (14) days in advance**, or **next day service**. METRA does not provide same day service.

When scheduling a trip, please remember that:

- There are **no** daily limits on the number of trips requested per day.
- Bus Operators **do not** make trip reservations.
- METRA **does not** impose restrictions or priorities based on a trip's purpose.

What information will you provide when scheduling a trip?

When calling to make a reservation, you should be prepared to provide the reservationist the following information:

- Your date of travel.
- Exact Addresses, including all of the appropriate numbers.
- Your requested appoint time *and* your return time.

- Whether a companion or Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Will be traveling with you.
- Whether a mobility device, such as a wheelchair or scooter, will be used during transport.
- Whether assistance will be needed beyond the curb as necessitated by the customer's disability.

Please note that reservationists are required to **ask for your complete information** and will **repeat** that information back to you to ensure that everything is correct.

Standing Reservations

Passengers traveling to and from the same destination at the same time, and on the same day of the week make a standing reservation. This means that it **will not be necessary** to call back and reserve each trip individually.

You may change your destination or pickup address on a standing reservation for a **minimum of two (2) weeks**. All changes to standing reservations must be made at least **one (1) day** prior to the scheduled date. Same day changes may not be accommodated.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), total standing reservations **may not exceed fifty percent (50%)** of space available at any time. Certain time periods **may not** have standing reservation time slots on an as needed. Please note that a subscription service is not mandated by 49 CFR §37.133.

How do you cancel a Reservation?

If there is a need to cancel a reservation, please call METRA's Dial-A-Ride service at (706) 225-4596. Cancellations may be made Monday through Friday, from 8am to 4:30pm. Please call **two (2) hours before the scheduled pick-up time** to cancel if you are able to do so.

When canceling an appointment, **be sure to give the following information** to the reservationist:

- Name

- Date of Reservation
- Time of Scheduled Pickup

METRA does not charge a fee for non-cancelations.

METRA does not have a “no show policy”

METRA does not have, nor do we enforce, a “no show policy” against Dial-A-Ride customers. METRA does, however, encourage its customers to, **if possible**, cancel in advance if a trip is no longer needed. Please cancel at least two (2) hours before a scheduled pickup time

Procedures for riding Dial-A-Ride

When using Dial-A-Ride, the following procedure apply:

- **Scheduled pick-up times will be based on appointment times.** All scheduled trips will be made an hour before or an hour after your requested time. This policy ensures that, during any given time period, the maximum number of possible passengers are able to be accommodated for.
- **Please allow fifteen (15) minutes scheduled pickup time for your bus to arrive.**
- When the bus reaches a passenger’s pickup point, the horn will be blown to acknowledge the arrival of the bus. The bus operator is required to only wait **five (5) minutes** for passengers to board the vehicle.
- Passengers will be picked up and taken to their schedule addresses **only**.
- Passengers **must pay at the time of pickup** with correct change or use of a fare card.
- Passengers who are unable to provide self-care for themselves **will not be deployed** at destinations unless an attendant is available or someone is able to receive them; otherwise, the passenger will be taken to their origin or pickup

Personal Care Attendants (PCAs)

If you are unable to travel alone because of your disability and require a **Personal care Attendant, or PCA**, then METRA **will not require a fare** for the PCA.

Passengers are required to provide their own PCAs. To ensure that space is available, the reservationist **must be informed** when scheduling a trip that a PCA will be traveling with you.

Passengers **under the age of twelve (12)** must be accompanied by an adult PCA who will ride for free.

Companions

Companions riding with passengers may ride with their passenger **if space is available**. Each traveling companion must pay the regular fare of a para-transit passenger. Child companions riding with passengers must pay a regular fare when occupying a seat.

Please note that, in order to ensure that room is available, the reservationist **must be informed when scheduling a trip** that a passenger will be accompanied by a companion.

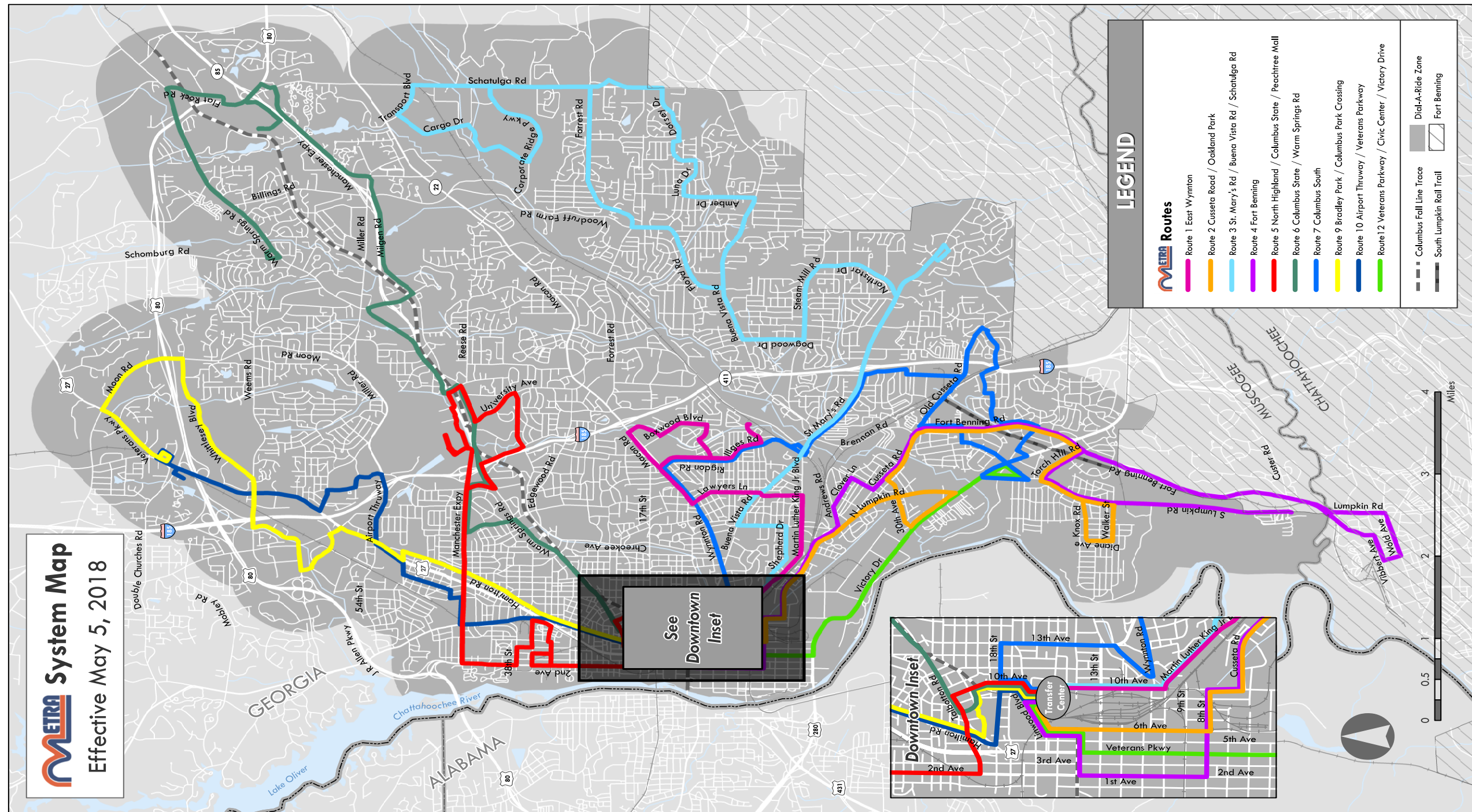
Transporting Packages

Each passenger is **allowed up to six (6) plastic grocery bags** when traveling Dial-A-Ride. Passengers are responsible for packages belonging.



System Map

Effective May 5, 2018



LEGEND

METRA Routes	
	Route 1 East Wynton
	Route 2 Cusseta Road / Oakland Park
	Route 3 St. Mary's Rd / Buena Vista Rd / Schatulga Rd
	Route 4 Fort Benning
	Route 5 North Highland / Columbus State / Peachtree Mall
	Route 6 Columbus State / Warm Springs Rd
	Route 7 Columbus South
	Route 9 Bradley Park / Columbus Park Crossing
	Route 10 Airport Thruway / Veterans Parkway
	Route 12 Veterans Parkway / Civic Center / Victory Drive
	Columbus Fall Line Trace
	Diol-A-Ride Zone
	South Lumpkin Rail Trail
	Fort Benning

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Service Animals

Service animals are **allowed** on the bus for persons with disabilities. A service animal may travel with their passenger but are subject to the following conditions:

- Service animals must remain on a leash or harness except when performing work or tasks where such tethering would interfere with the animal's ability to perform.
- Service animals must **remain under their owner's control** and not pose a direct threat to others.
- Service animals must **remain in a down or sitting position**.
- Service animals must **not block the aisle**.

Dial-A-Ride Fares

- The one-way fare is \$2.50
- Fares may be paid with the **exact amount of cash, with swipe cards, or with a smart card**.
- Fare card purchases may be made with personal checks or credit cards.
- METRA **cannot** replace lost, stolen, or unused cards.
- Fares are subject to change with notification.

Visitors with Disabilities Policy

Visitors who are disabled are given "Presumptive Eligibility" and are able to use Dial-A-Ride's services **up to 21 days per year without being certified by METRA**. Visitors who plan on using Dial-A-Ride's services longer than 21 days must become certified through METRA.

METRA's ADA Eligibility Card is recognized throughout the country and passengers may use it to **ride paratransit services wherever available**.

How to Board with a Mobility Aid Device

Customers may use wheelchairs, scooters, canes, walkers, strollers for children with disabilities, and all three (3) or more wheeled devices that are usable indoors. METRA's fleet is designed to accommodate a mobility device that is **thirty (30) inches wide by forty-eight (48) inches long and weighing up to six hundred (600) pounds with its passenger.**

For safety and comfort while boarding and traveling with a mobility device, METRA asks customers to follow these procedures when boarding:

- If using a bus lift, **board your mobility device onto the lift.**
- **Lock your brakes** while on the lift.
- **Turn off** your battery powered device. Your Dial-A-Ride operator will instruct you when to re-engage.
- **Wait for your operator's assistance** and follow their instructions for entering the bus.



Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications

On March 12, 2015, the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) issued a Final Rule under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The rule states that transportation entities are required to make reasonable modifications or accommodations to avoid discrimination and to ensure that services are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

While METRA makes all reasonable efforts to accommodate riders, if a customer's mobility device is larger than these specifications, then METRA may not be able to transport the customer to avoid damaging the vehicle or imposing a safety hazard.

Requests for Reasonable Modifications for Dial-A-Ride and Fixed Route

Requests for reasonable modifications for disabled passengers may be made by anyone who believes that an existing policy, procedure, or practice needs to be modified to ensure that the transportation services provided by METRA Transit System are accessible to persons with disabilities that are consistent with the US DOT's Reasonable Modifications of Policies and Practices Final Rule and 49 CFR §37.133.

METRA's Reasonable Request Form may be found online at <https://www.columbusga.gov/metra/Civil-Rights/ADA>. While On this page, click on the link "More Information / Reasonable Modification Request Form" that is found under the section "Reasonable Modification."

You may also call METRA at (706) 225-4596 and request that a form be mailed to you.

Requests may be returned via emailed to METRA at: metrainfo@columbusga.org

Requests may also be returned in via mail to:

METRA Transit System
P.O. Box 1340
Columbus, GA, 31902-1340

When possible and practical, individuals with disabilities who wish to request a modification **should do so in advance** of using METRA's services. The request should be as specific as possible and include information on why the requested modification is needed in order to allow the individual to use METRA's services.

Continued on Next page->

Requests for modification of METRA's policies and procedure **may be denied only on one or more of the following grounds**

- Granting the request would fundamentally alter the nature of METRA's services, programs or activities.
- Granting the request would create a direct threat to the health and/or safety of others.
- Without the requested modification, the individual with a disability is able to fully use METRA's services, programs, or activities for their intended purposes

Passenger Rules of Conduct when using Dial-A-Ride

- No eating, drinking, smoking, or tobacco use while on the vehicle. Exceptions for eating and drinking are made under reasonable modification for persons with disabilities.
- No drinking of alcoholic beverages or riding under the influence of intoxicating substances while riding on METRA vehicles.
- Do not operate or tamper with equipment on the vehicle. This includes operating the vehicle's lift or ramp and tampering with mobility securement devices.
- Any passengers causing disturbances with other passengers, using profane language, and/or committing any other violation may be temporarily suspended.
- To ensure the safety of all customers, items that are a safety hazard are prohibited. This includes having excessively large items and having too many items.
- Engaging in violent behavior against and/or physical or verbally threatening a Dial-A-Ride operator or fellow passenger is prohibited.

- Damaging or destroying vehicle equipment is prohibited.
- Service animals are not allowed to occupy a seat on the bus.

ADA Compliance and How to file a Complaint

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Columbus Consolidated Government/METRA Transit System provides all of its services, including public transit services, without regard to disability.

If you believe that you have been discriminated against by METRA Transit System based on your disability, then you may file then you may file a complaint with METRA and/or the FTA Office of Civil Rights.

Customers may **file a complaint with the City of Columbus** by filling out the form found on pages 18 and 19 of this guide.

The form is also found online at <https://www.columbusga.gov/metra/Civil-Rights/ADA> by clicking on the link "[ADA Complaint Form](#)."

You may also call METRA at (706) 225-4596 and request that a form be mailed to you.

Customers may also **file an FTA complaint** by following the instructions provided on the FTA's Civil Rights complaint webpage at: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/civil-rights-ada/file-complaint-fta>

All complaints should be filed within 180 days of the alleged act of discrimination.

METRA provides customers with a separate form to file a complaint with the City of Columbus. Please see pages 18 and 19 for a copy of that form. All forms must be returned to METRA via mail to:

Attn: ADA Coordinator
METRA Transit System
P.O. Box 1340
Columbus, GA, 31902-1340

METRA Transit System ADA Complaint Form

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Columbus Consolidated Government/ METRA Transit system operates all of its programs and provides public transportation services without regard to disability. Anyone who believes that they have been subjected to unlawful discriminatory practices by METRA Transit System due to a disability has the right to file an ADA complaint with the City of Columbus. This complaint must be filed within 180 days from the date of the alleged incident of discrimination.

The information that you provide is necessary to assist us in processing your complaint. If assistance is needed in completing this form, please call METRA at (706) 225-4596. The completed form must be sent to METRA Transit System at 814 Linwood Blvd., Columbus, GA 31901.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Alternate Phone: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State & Zip Code: _____

Please describe the alleged incident of discrimination as accurately as possible, including names, dates, and times. Provide the names of all METRA employees involved if available. Explain what happened and whom you believed was responsible. Please use the back of this form if additional space is needed.

I affirm that I have read the above accusation and that it is true to the best of my knowledge.

Complainant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

If more space is needed please continue:

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Contact Information

Reservations/Dial-A-Ride (706) 225-4596

Fax (706) 225-4429

Website: www.columbusga.gov/Metra/
711 (Georgia Relay for Hearing Impaired)
Transfer Center (706) 225-4673

ADA Complaint

- The City of Columbus/METRA operates its program and services in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and associated laws, ordinances and regulations which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability.
- If customers feel that they were discriminated against by METRA based on their disability, then they may file a complaint with METRA. For more information, please call (706) 225-4596 or visit our website at <https://www.columbusga.gov/metra/Civil-Rights/ADA>
- Complaints may also be filed at any time with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) by visiting their website at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/civil-rights-ada/fta-civil-rights-complaint-form> and following the instructions provided.

Notifying the Public of Rights Under Title VI

The Columbus Consolidated Government – Department of Transportation/METRA

- The City of Columbus/METRA operates its program and services without regard to race, color, and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Any person who believes she or he has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI may file a complaint with the City of Columbus/METRA.
- For more information on the City of Columbus/METRA's civil rights program, and the procedures to file a complaint, contact (706) 225-4581, or mail completed forms to: METRA: Attn: Title VI; PO Box 1340; Columbus, GA 31901. For more information, visit <https://www.columbusga.gov/metra/>
- A complainant may file a complaint directly with the Federal Transit Administration at any time by filing a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator, East Building, 5th Floor-TCR, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20590.
- If information is needed in another language, contact (706) 225-4581
 - Si se necesita informacion en otro idioma, llame (706) 225-4581
 - Si l'information est necessaire dans une autre langue, contactez (706) 225-4581

Notes

Please use the space provided below to make notes.